

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

BYRON'S SIEGE OF CORINTH

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

P. HORDERN

LATE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN BURMA



LONDON
GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK ST., COVENT GARDEN
AND NEW YORK

1894

INTRODUCTION.

ALL that can be said of Lord Byron and of his poetry has been so fully and so well said already, that it seems unnecessary to burden a text-book of this nature with any lengthy introduction. Every student of Byron has access, if not to the *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* by Thomas Moore, at least to the review of that work which constitutes one of Lord Macaulay's best known essays, and contains in eloquent language a succinct, and for the most part accurate, estimate of the man and of his work. Among later notices of the poet the reader may be referred to the monograph by Professor Nichol in Macmillan's series of *English Men of Letters*.

In all literary history there is nothing of more painful interest than the story of the young man endowed with every most coveted gift of fortune, the dazzling successes, social and literary, the sudden fall, the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure, with its bitter after-fruits, the generous impulses, the noble aspirations, the self-devotion, the early and pathetic death.

Born in 1788, Byron was heavily weighted at the outset for the race of life. Captain Byron, his father, was a man wholly without principle, while his mother, to some admirable qualities, united a temper at once stormy and capricious and a total want of self-control. Starting with such a moral inheritance, he succeeded, as a child of eleven, to the title

which he was to make famous, and subsequently passed through the usual public school and university course at Harrow and Cambridge. It was while an undergraduate at Cambridge that he gave the first indication of literary talent in his *Hours of Idleness*, a volume which contained no forecast of the brilliant career to which it was the prelude, and of the commanding position its author was destined to attain. It was, however, the merciless criticism to which this early venture was exposed by the *Edinburgh Review* which first placed Byron on his mettle and led him to put forth his latent strength. The lash of the critic to so proud and sensitive a nature was like the whip to a thoroughbred horse, and it was by the crushing retort of his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* that his genius was first made known to and recognised by the world. Thenceforth his course was clear, and it only remained to determine the form in which the newly revealed powers should be displayed. This was decided by the employment of the next two years in foreign travel. A tour through Greece and the Levant (referred to at the opening of the *Siege of Corinth*) served as the motive for the beginning of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a poem which raised Byron at once to the summit of literary fame. On his return to England he became the prime favourite of London society. The poet of the day, with youth, rank, and striking personal beauty to recommend him, and without restraining influence of any kind, it was no wonder that he yielded to the temptations of such a position, and threw himself heart and soul into a life of pleasure and dissipation. But the triumph was as short-lived as it was empty. The moment when the years thus devoted to excitement seemed to be crowned by a happy marriage, promising a future of more sober prosperity, proved only the turning-point in his popularity and the herald of his social ruin. He was married to Miss Milbanke in 1815, and a year later, without a word of warning or

explanation, for some reason to this day unknown, his wife left him, never to return. The event was the signal for a revolt among his worshippers. The fair-weather friends of a fickle and careless society took the lady's part, and in a moment turned to execrate the man to whom they had till then yielded such extravagant homage ; on which, Byron, wholly unable to resist the storm, left his native country for ever, making his subsequent home first in Switzerland and then in Italy. Henceforth, while his pen continued to work with an activity which cost him little or no effort, throwing off poem after poem which the world eagerly bought and cherished, the life of reckless devotion to pleasure was only transferred to new scenes ; till, under the influence of the Countess Guiccioli, the last and most worthy of his many mistresses, and to whom he remained constant to the end, he seemed to attain some measure of soberness and repose. Meantime, his mind turned more and more from literature to politics and practical affairs. Aristocrat and conservative as he was by inheritance, his convictions were those of an advanced revolutionary ; and he warmly espoused first the cause of the Italian people against their rulers, and then that of the Greeks in their efforts to throw off the Turkish yoke. Placing both his life and fortune at the disposal of the Greek cause, he was appointed to high command in the insurgent army, and entered upon the struggle with no less judgment than enthusiasm. But the effort came too late. He had too long played the spendthrift with a constitution never robust : his health collapsed under the strain of the hardships of war, and he died of fever at Missolonghi at the very outset of the campaign, at the early age of 36, on the 19th of April 1824.

As regards his poetry, it seems as if men had hardly yet finally assigned its place in English literature, so contradictory have been the estimates of its value, formed alike by scholars and in the popular judgment.

The period at which he wrote was one in which two entirely antagonistic embodiments of the spirit of poetry contended for the popular favour. While Scott and Byron attained immediate and unbounded popularity, it was to a wholly different and not less influential public that Wordsworth and his followers of the lake school of poetry made their appeal. The contradictory spirit by which the rivals were possessed is enough to explain the rooted antipathy of Byron to Southey and Wordsworth, prophets of rural peace and religious calm. On the other hand, there was very much that was attractive to Byron in the chivalry and fire of such a writer as Scott, and still more in the bird-like singing of Shelley, and his equally bird-like passion for freedom, and rebellion against every form of restraint. So that we can understand the sympathy which drew him into the warm personal friendship with both Shelley and Scott, which forms so pleasant an episode in his spoilt and feverish life. To Englishmen, who have perhaps never done full justice to the genius of Byron, it is less easy to realise the impression made by his poetry on foreign readers. Led by the authoritative voice of Goethe, the critics of Germany, France, Italy, and Spain have concurred in placing him on a level with Shakespeare and Milton,—a higher eminence than any assigned to him by the most enthusiastic of his own countrymen.

Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that Byron will always retain his place in the front rank of England's inspired singers, whether he be shunned as the incarnation of evil, or welcomed as a familiar friend. For the rest, the key to his success or failure as a poet, and to the nature of his permanent influence, may be found in a peculiarity to which special attention is drawn by Macaulay: "He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape. He always described himself as a man of the same kind with

his favourite creations, as a man whose heart had been withered, whose capacity for happiness was gone and could not be restored, but whose invincible spirit dared the worst that could befall him, here or hereafter." "How far," proceeds Macaulay, "the character in which he exhibited himself was genuine, and how far theatrical, it would probably have puzzled himself to say."

It is in this unconscious mixture of the genuine and the theatrical, which forms so marked a characteristic of his work, that we have the secret of Byron's varying power. There are defects in abundance patent on the surface of his poems,—in careless diction, in morbid or depraved sentiment, even in absolute feebleness of thought or expression: all these, however, are readily overlooked as we are carried away by the torrent of true poetic thought which again and again bursts forth in lines that live in the memory. Only, it is with Byron as with every man who would influence others by his words: it is in proportion to the genuineness of the thought that his poetry hits the mark; in proportion as we feel the undefined influence of the unreal and artificial that it fails—as it does a thousand times—to awaken any response in the mind of the reader.

The *Siege of Corinth* was written in the year 1815, when Byron was twenty-seven years of age, just after his marriage, and belongs to the second of the three periods into which his authorship was divided. The subject was one exceptionally suited to his genius. The scene was laid in a country with whose beautiful scenery the poet was thoroughly familiar,—one to which he was attracted by all the influences of early association, and by ties of the strongest personal feeling; a land which indeed inspired him with his noblest enthusiasm, and for which he ultimately laid down his life; while the plot, founded on historic fact, and drawn from a tragic episode in a bitter war of religion and race, was one which afforded an appro-

priate field for the development of characters such as he loved to portray.

Since the days when the huge Empire of Rome was broken up, the ill-fated city of Corinth, unfortunate in her commanding position on the confines of East and West, had been again and again the prize of war to contending nations. After nearly three centuries of possession, the Venetians had been driven from Greece by the Turks at the end of the 15th century. Recovered a century later by the Venetian Morosini, the Morea passed again into the hands of Venice, but only for a brief period. In 1715, the time to which the poem relates, the Turks, under the Grand Vizier Ali Coumourgi, marched an overwhelming army into the country, one of the first incidents of the invasion being the siege which forms the subject of Byron's poem. Corinth fell (an accidental explosion of a mine leading to a merciless sack of the city), and Greece became once more part of the Turkish empire, her final emancipation being deferred till the battle of Navarino in 1827.

The poem opens with the picture of the doomed city, closely invested by the motley army of the Sultan, with its regiments of many nations stretching from the city walls, and the shore of the Corinthian gulf, up to the slopes of Cithæron, which shut in the isthmus from the north.

Conspicuous as the moving spirit of the invaders is Alp the renegade, a Christian and Venetian by birth, who, embittered by false accusations, and by the failure of a hopeless love, has turned traitor to his country and his creed, embraced the faith of Islam, and now leads the enemy against his own countrymen in the lonely fortress of Corinth. Moreover, the girl, lovely as Helen, to whose hand he aspired, is here in the devoted city, daughter of Menotti, Venetian governor of Corinth. The situation is tragic enough. The siege advances rapidly, every day showing more clearly the hopelessness of the defence, when, the night before the final

assault, Alp, restless and sleepless, wanders by the shore under the city walls, envying his soldiers their sleep, and himself a prey to conflicting thoughts. In this mood he is startled by a sudden vision. In the soft moonlight he sees clearly before him, seated by a broken pillar, his own beloved Francesca. She speaks, and implores him by his love for her to renounce his faithlessness and return to the Christian fold, promising to be his bride if he will consent. A moment is given for decision—while a cloud crosses the moon—but in that moment the spirit of evil triumphs, and Alp sacrifices for ever all hope of happiness here or hereafter. The vision is gone, and he is alone. The day of the assault breaks, the victorious Turks enter the breach, and the sack of the city begins. Alp and Menotti meet face to face, when, at the moment when he hears from her father of the death of his beloved, a shot from a neighbouring building pierces the brain of the renegade. The last stand of the defenders is made in the Christian church, where by the high altar Menotti takes up his position, ready to fight to the last. Under his feet, among the vaults sacred to the dead, is a mine of gunpowder, needing only a spark to explode. At the last moment, when the altar with its sacred vessels is almost within the grasp of the invader, Menotti fires the mine with his own hand, and the fortress, carrying with it defenders and invaders alike, is blown into the air in one tremendous explosion.

The conception thus worked out furnishes a singularly complete example of Lord Byron's poetry. In the small compass of this poem we have every most marked characteristic of his work,—the unique descriptive power, the flowing rhythm, the loose composition, the typical hero and heroine, the devotion to classic Greece, some of the weakest and some of the most touching lines he has written,—while the effect produced on us by the whole is that sense of mingled admiration and disappointment which seems to be

the outcome of all his poetry. If we can find little to attract in the sickening details of the horrors of war, little to interest in the character of the melodramatic hero; and if, with his friend Gifford, we would have had him expunge not a few of the lines, it is impossible, nevertheless, not to be borne away as we read by the flowing tide of song, while at intervals there occur passages that touch the heart with a power which is given only to the masterpieces of inspired genius.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

In the year since Jesus died for men,
Eighteen hundred years and ten,
We were a gallant company,
Riding o'er land, and sailing o'er sea.
Oh ! but we went merrily ! 5
We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,
Never our steeds for a day stood still ;
Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,
Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed ;
Whether we couch'd in our rough capôte, 10
On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,
Or stretch'd on the beach, or our saddles spread
As a pillow beneath the resting head,
Fresh we woke upon the morrow :
All our thoughts and words had scope, 15
We had health, and we had hope,
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.
We were of all tongues and creeds ;—
Some were those who counted beads,
Some of mosque, and some of church, 20
And some, or I mis-say, of neither ;
Yet through the wide world might ye search,
Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.

But some are dead, and some are gone,
 And some are scatter'd and alone, 25
 And some are rebels on the hills
 That look along Epirus valleys,
 Where freedom still at moments rallies,
 And pays in blood oppression's ills ;
 And some are in a far countree, 30
 And some all restlessly at home ;
 But never more, oh ! never, we
 Shall meet to revel and to roam.

But those hardy days flew cheerily !
 And when they now fall drearily, 35
 My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
 And bear my spirit back again
 Over the earth, and through the air,
 A wild bird and a wanderer.
 'Tis this that ever wakes my strain, 40
 And oft, too oft, implores again
 The few who may endure my lay,
 To follow me so far away.
 Stranger—wilt thou follow now,
 And sit with me on Acro-Corinth's brow ? 45

I.

Many a vanish'd year and age,
 And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
 Have swept o'er Corinth ; yet she stands,
 A fortress form'd to Freedom's hands.
 The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock, 50
 Have left untouch'd her hoary rock,
 The keystone of a land, which still,
 Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
 The landmark to the double tide
 That purpling rolls on either side, 55
 As if their waters chafed to meet,
 Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.

But could the blood before her shed
 Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
 Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 60
 Arise from out the earth which drank
 The stream of slaughter as it sank,
 That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
 Her isthmus idly spread below :
 Or could the bones of all the slain, 65
 Who perish'd there, be piled again,
 That rival pyramid would rise
 More mountain-like, through those clear skies,
 Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis,
 Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 70

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
 The gleam of twice ten thousand spears ;
 And downward to the Isthmian plain,
 From shore to shore of either main,
 The tent is pitch'd, the crescent shines 75
 Along the Moslem's leaguering lines ;
 And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
 Beneath each bearded pacha's glance ;
 And far and wide as eye can reach
 The turban'd cohorts throng the beach ; 80
 And there the Arab's camel kneels,
 And there his steed the Tartar wheels ;
 The Turcoman hath left his herd,
 The sabre round his loins to gird ;
 And there the volleying thunders pour, 85
 Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
 The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
 Wings the far hissing globe of death ;
 Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
 Which crumbles with the ponderous ball ; 90
 And from that wall the foe replies,
 O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,

With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war's black art,
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood ;
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail ;
Or where the battery, guarded well,
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire ;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast,
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade ;—
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade !

IV.

From Venice—once a race of worth
His gentle sires—he drew his birth ;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear ; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow.
Through many a change had Corinth pass'd
With Greece to Venice' rule at last ;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,

He stood a foe, with all the zeal 125
 Which young and fiery converts feel,
 Within whose heated bosom throngs
 The memory of a thousand wrongs.
 To him had Venice ceased to be
 Her ancient civic boast—"the Free"; 130
 And in the palace of St Mark
 Unnamed accusers in the dark
 Within the "Lion's mouth" had placed
 A charge against him uneffaced :
 He fled in time, and saved his life, 135
 To waste his future years in strife,
 That taught his land how great her loss
 In him who triumph'd o'er the Cross,
 'Gainst which he rear'd the Crescent high,
 And battled to avenge or die. 140

v.

Continued in whose closing scene
 Adorn'd the triumph of Eugene,
 When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
 The last and mightiest of the slain,
 He sank, regretting not to die, 145
 But cursed the Christian's victory—
 Coumourgi—can his glory cease,
 That latest conqueror of Greece,
 Till Christian hands to Greece restore
 The freedom Venice gave of yore? 150
 A hundred years have roll'd away
 Since he refixed the Moslem's sway
 And now he led the Mussulman,
 And gave the guidance of the van
 To Alp, who well repaid the trust 155
 By cities levell'd with the dust ;
 And proved, by many a deed of death
 How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak ; and fast and hot
Against them pour'd the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent
From battery to battlement ;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin ;
And here and there some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb ;
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flash'd
The flame, as loud the ruin crash'd,
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven ;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delay'd,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach :
Within these walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeach'd for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glitter'd through the Carnival ;
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters play'd
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deem'd her heart was won ;
 For sought by numbers, given to none, 195
 Had young Francesca's hand remain'd
 Still by the church's bonds unchain'd :
 And when the Adriatic bore
 Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
 Her wonted smiles were seen to fail, 200
 And pensive wax'd the maid and pale ;
 More constant at confessional,
 More rare at masque and festival ;
 Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
 Which conquer'd hearts they ceased to prize : 205
 With listless look she seems to gaze :
 With humbler care her form arrays ;
 Her voice less lively in the song ;
 Her step, though light, less fleet among
 The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance 210
 Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
 (Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
 While Sobieski tamed his pride
 By Buda's wall and Danube's side, 215
 The chiefs of Venice wrung away
 From Patra to Eubœa's bay,)
 Minotti held in Corinth's towers
 The doge's delegated powers,
 While yet the pitying eye of Peace 220
 Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece :
 And ere that faithless truce was broke
 Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
 With him his gentle daughter came ;
 Nor there, since Menelaus' dame 225
 Forsook her lord and land, to prove
 What woes await on lawless love,

Had fairer form adorn'd the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn ;
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are rank'd ; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed " forlorn,"
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone—the last who dies !

XI.

'Tis midnight : on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down ;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright ;
Who ever gazed upon them shining
And turn'd to earth without repining,
Nor wish'd for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray ?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air ;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmur'd meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillow'd on the waves ;
The banners droop'd along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling ;

And that deep silence was unbroke, 260
 Save where the watch his signal spoke,
 Save where the steed neigh'd oft and shrill,
 And echo answer'd from the hill,
 And the wide hum of that wild host
 Rustled like leaves from coast to coast, 265
 As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
 In midnight call to wonted prayer ;
 It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
 Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain :
 'Twas musical, but sadly sweet, 270
 Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
 And take a long unmeasured tone,
 To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
 It seem'd to those within the wall
 A cry prophetic of their fall : 275
 It struck even the besieger's ear
 With something ominous and drear,
 An undefined and sudden thrill,
 Which makes the heart a moment still,
 Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed 280
 Of that strange sense its silence framed ;
 Such as a sudden passing-bell
 Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore ;
 The sound was hush'd, the prayer was o'er ; 285
 The watch was set, the night-round made,
 All mandates issued and obey'd :
 'Tis but another anxious night,
 His pains the morrow may requite
 With all revenge and love can pay, 290
 In guerdon for their long delay.
 Few hours remain, and he hath need
 Of rest, to nerve for many a deed

Of slaughter ; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host ;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be
By Houris loved immortally :
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone—a renegade
Against the country he betray'd ;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand :
They followed him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave ;
They crouch'd to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will :
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earn'd beneath a Moslem name ;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop ;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern ;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel.
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first :
So lions o'er the jackal sway ;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar yelling press,
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII.

His head grows fever'd, and his pulse
 The quick successive throbs convulse ;
 In vain from side to side he throws
 His form, in courtship of repose ; 335
 Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
 Awoke him with a sunken heart.
 The turban on his hot brow press'd,
 The mail weigh'd lead-like on his breast,
 Though oft and long beneath its weight 340
 Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
 Without or couch or canopy,
 Except a rougher field and sky
 Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
 Than now along the heaven was spread. 345
 He could not rest, he could not stay
 Within his tent to wait for day,
 But walk'd him forth along the sand,
 Where thousand sleepers strew'd the strand.
 What pillow'd them ? and why should he 350
 More wakeful than the humblest be,
 Since more their peril, worse their toil ?
 And yet they fearless dream of spoil ;
 While he alone, where thousands pass'd
 A night of sleep, perchance their last, 355
 In sickly vigil wander'd on,
 And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light
 Beneath the freshness of the night,
 Cool was the silent sky, though calm, 360
 And bathed his brow with airy balm :
 Behind, the camp—before him lay,
 In many a winding creek and bay,
 Lepanto's gulf ; and, on the brow
 Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow, 365

High and eternal, such as shone
 Through thousand summers brightly gone,
 Along the gulf, the mount, the clime ;
 It will not melt, like man, to time :
 Tyrant and slave are swept away, 370
 Less form'd to wear before the ray ;
 But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
 Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
 While tower and tree are torn and rent,
 Shines o'er its craggy battlement ; 375
 In form a peak, in height a cloud,
 In texture like a hovering shroud,
 Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
 As from her fond abode she fled,
 And linger'd on the spot, where long 380
 Her prophet spirit spake in song.
 Oh ! still her step at moments falters
 O'er wither'd fields, and ruin'd altars,
 And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
 By pointing to each glorious token : 385
 But vain her voice, till better days
 Dawn in those yet remember'd rays,
 Which shone upon the Persian flying,
 And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times 390
 Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes ;
 And through this night, as on he wander'd,
 And o'er the past and present ponder'd,
 And thought upon the glorious dead
 Who there in better cause had bled, 395
 He felt how faint and feebly dim
 The fame that could accrue to him,
 Who cheer'd the band, and waved the sword,
 A traitor in a turban'd horde ;
 And led them to the lawless siege, 400
 Whose best success were sacrilege.

Not so had those his fancy number'd,
 The chiefs whose dust around him slumber'd ;
 Their phalanx marshall'd on the plain,
 Whose bulwarks were not then in vain. 405
 They fell devoted, but undying ;
 The very gale their names seem'd sighing ;
 The waters murmur'd of their name ;
 The woods were peopled with their fame ;
 The silent pillar, lone and grey, 410
 Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay ;
 Their spirits wrapp'd the dusky mountain,
 Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain ;
 The meanest rill, the mightiest river
 Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever. 415
 Despite of every yoke she bears,
 That land is glory's still and theirs !
 'Tis still a watch-word to the earth :
 When man would do a deed of worth
 He points to Greece, and turns to tread, 420
 So sanction'd, on the tyrant's head :
 He looks to her, and rushes on
 Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
 And woo'd the freshness Night diffused. 425
 There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,
 Which changeless rolls eternally ;
 So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
 Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood ;
 And the powerless moon beholds them flow, 430
 Heedless if she come or go :
 Calm or high, in main or bay,
 On their course she hath no sway.
 The rock unworn its base doth bare,
 And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there ; 435
 And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
 On the line that it left long ages ago :

A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wander'd on along the beach, 440
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall ; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot ?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold ?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts wax'd cold, 445
I know not, in sooth ; but from yonder wall
There flash'd no fire, and their hiss'd no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the town ;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell 450
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro ;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival, 455
Gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb ;
They were too busy to bark at him !
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh ;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull, 460
As it slipp'd through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed ;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast. 465
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band :
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare. 470
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw :
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,

Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away, 475
 Scared by the dogs, from the human prey ;
 But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
 Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turn'd him from the sickening sight :
 Never had shaken his nerves in fight ; 480
 But he better could brook to behold the dying,
 Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
 Scorch'd with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,
 Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
 There is something of pride in the perilous hour, 485
 Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower ;
 For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
 And Honour's eye on daring deeds !
 But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
 O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,²⁰ 490
 And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
 Beasts of the forest, all gathering there ;
 All regarding man as their prey,
 All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands, 495
 Fashion'd by long forgotten hands ;
 Two or three columns, and many a stone,
 Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown !
 Out upon Time ! it will leave no more
 Of the things to come than the things before ! 500
 Out upon Time ! who for ever will leave
 But enough of the past for the future to grieve
 O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be :
 What we have seen, our sons shall see ;
 Remnants of things that have pass'd away, 505
 Fragments of stone, rear'd by creatures of clay !

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
 And pass'd his hand athwart his face ;
 Like one in dreary musing mood,
 Declining was his attitude ; 510
 His head was drooping on his breast,
 Fever'd, throbbing, and oppress'd ;
 And o'er his brow, so downward bent
 Oft his beating fingers went,
 Hurriedly, as you may see 515
 Your own run over the ivory key,
 Ere the measured tone is taken
 By the chords you would awaken.
 There he sate all heavily,
 As he heard the night-wind sigh. 520
 Was it the wind through some hollow stone,
 Sent that soft and tender moan ?
 He lifted his head, and he look'd on the sea,
 But it was unrippled as glass may be ;
 He look'd on the long grass—it waved not a blade ; 525
 How was that gentle sound convey'd ?
 He look'd to the banners—each flag lay still,
 So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
 And he felt not a breath come over his cheek ;
 What did that sudden sound bespeak ? 530
 He turn'd to the left—is he sure of sight ?
 There sate a lady, youthful and bright !

XX.

He started up with more of fear
 Than if an armed foe were near.
 " God of my fathers ! what is here ? 535
 Who art thou ? and wherefore sent
 So near a hostile armament ?"
 His trembling hands refused to sign
 The cross he deem'd no more divine :
 He had resum'd it in that hour, 540
 But conscience wrung away the power.

He gazed, he saw : he knew the face
 Of beauty, and the form of grace ;
 It was Francesca by his side,
 The maid who might have been his bride ! 545

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
 But mellow'd with a tenderer streak :
 Where was the play of her soft lips fled ?
 Gone was the smile that enliven'd their red.
 The ocean's calm within their view, 550
 Beside her eye had less of blue ;
 But like that cold wave it stood still,
 And its glance, though clear, was chill.
 Around her form a thin robe twining,
 Nought conceal'd her bosom shining ; 555
 Through the parting of her hair,
 Floating darkly downward there,
 Her rounded arm show'd white and bare :
 And ere yet she made reply,
 Once she raised her hand on high ; 560
 It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
 You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

I come from my rest to him I love best,
 That I may be happy, and he may be bless'd.
 I have pass'd the guards, the gate, the wall ; 565
 Sought thee in safety through foes and all,
 'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
 From a maid in the pride of her purity ;
 And the Power on high, that can shield the good
 Thus from the tyrant of wood, 570
 Hath extended his mercy to guard me as well
 From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
 I come—and if I come in vain,
 Never, oh never, we meet again !
 Thou hast done a fearful deed 575
 In falling away from thy fathers' creed :

But dash that turban to earth, and sign
 The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine ;
 Wring the black drop from thy heart,
 And to-morrow unites us no more to part." 580

"And where should our bridal couch be spread ?
 In the midst of the dying and the dead ?
 For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
 The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.
 None, save thou and thine, I've sworn, 585
 Shall be left upon the morn :
 But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
 Where our hands shall be join'd, and our sorrow forgot.
 There thou yet shall be my bride,
 When once again I've quell'd the pride 590
 Of Venice ; and her hated race
 Have felt the arm they would debase
 Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
 Whom vice and envy made my foes."

Upon his hand she laid her own— 595
 Light was the touch, but it thrill'd to the bone,
 And shot a chillness to his heart,
 Which fix'd him beyond the power to start.
 Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
 He could not loose him from its hold ; 600
 But never did clasp of one so dear
 Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
 As those thin fingers, long and white,
 Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
 The feverish glow of his brow was gone, 605
 And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
 As he look'd on the face, and beheld its hue,
 So deeply changed from what he knew :
 Fair but faint—without the ray
 Of mind, that made each feature play 610
 Like sparkling waves on a sunny day ;

And her motionless lips lay still as death,
 And her words came forth without her breath,
 And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
 And there seem'd not a pulse in her veins to dwell. 615
 Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fix'd,
 And the glance that it gave was wild and unmix'd
 With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
 Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream ;
 Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare, 620
 Stirr'd by the breath of the wintry air,
 So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
 Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight ;
 As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
 From the shadowy wall where their images frown ; 625
 Fearfully flitting to and fro,
 As the guests on the tapestry come and go.

" If not for love of me be given
 Thus much, then, for the love of heaven,—
 Again I say—that turban tear 630
 From off thy faithless brow, and swear
 Thine injured country's sons to spare,
 Or thou art lost ; and never shall see—
 Not earth—that's past—but heaven or me.
 If this thou dost accord, albeit 635
 A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet,
 That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
 And mercy's gate may receive thee within :
 But pause one moment more, and take
 The curse of Him thou didst forsake : 640
 And look once more to heaven, and see
 Its love for ever shut from thee.
 There is a light cloud by the moon—
 'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—
 If, by the time its vapoury sail 645
 Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
 Thy heart within thee is not changed,
 Then God and man are both avenged ;

Dark will thy doom be, darker still
Thine immortality of ill."

650

Alp look'd to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky :
But his heart was swollen, and turn'd aside,
By deep interminable pride.
This first false passion of his breast
Roll'd like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy ! *He* dismay'd
By wild words of a timid maid !
He, wrong'd by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave !
No—though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him—let it burst !

655

660

He look'd upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply ;
He watch'd it passing ; it is flown :
Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake—"Whate'er my fate,
I am no changeling—'tis too late :
The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
Then rise again ; the tree must shiver.
What Venice made me, I must be,
Her foe in all save love to thee :
But thou art safe : oh, fly with me !"
He turn'd, but she is gone !
Nothing is there but the column stone.
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air ?
He saw not—he knew not—but nothing is there.

665

670

675

XXII.

The night is past, and shines
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away
The Morning from her mantle grey,

680

And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
 Hark to the trump and the drum,
 And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
 And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne, 685
 And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
 And the clash, and the shout, "They come! they come!"
 The horsetails are pluck'd from the ground, and the
 sword
 From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
 Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman, 690
 Strike your tents and throng to the van;
 Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
 That the fugitive may flee in vain,
 When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
 Aged or young, in the Christian shape; 695
 While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
 Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
 The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
 Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
 White is the foam of their champ on the bit; 700
 The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
 The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
 And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
 Forms in his phalanx each janizar;
 Alp at their head; his right arm is bare, 705
 So is the blade of his scimitar;
 The khan and the pachas are all at their post;
 The vizier himself at the head of the host.
 When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
 Leave not in Corinth a living one— 710
 A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
 A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.
 God and the prophet—Alla Hu!
 Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
 "There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale; 715
 And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
 He who first downs with the red cross may crave
 His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!"

Thus utter'd Commourgi, the dauntless vizier ;
 The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear, 720
 And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire :—
 Silence—hark to the signal—fire !

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
 On the stately buffalo,
 Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar, 725
 And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
 He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
 The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die.
 Thus against the wall they went,
 Thus the first were backward bent ; 730
 Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
 Strew'd the earth like broken glass,
 Shiver'd by the shot, that tore
 The ground whereon they moved no more :
 Even as they fell, in files they lay, 735
 Like the mower's grass at the close of day,
 When his work is done on the levell'd plain ;
 Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,
 From the cliffs invading dash 740
 Huge fragments, sapp'd by the ceaseless flow,
 Till white and thundering down they go,
 Like the avalanche's snow
 On the Alpine vales below ;
 Thus at length, outbreathed and worn, 745
 Corinth's sons were downward borne
 By the long and oft renew'd
 Charge of the Moslem multitude.
 In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
 Heap'd by the host of the infidel, 750
 Hand to hand, and foot to foot :
 Nothing there, save death, was mute ;

Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
 For quarter, or for victory,
 Mingle there with the volleying thunder, 755
 Which makes the distant cities wonder
 How the sounding battle goes,
 If with them, or for their foes ;
 If they must mourn, or may rejoice
 In that annihilating voice, 760
 Which pierces the deep hills through and through
 With an echo dread and new :
 You might have heard it, on that day,
 O'er Salamis and Megara ;
 (We have heard the hearers say,) 765
 Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
 Sabres and swords with blood were gilt ;
 But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
 And all but the after carnage done. 770
 Shriller shrieks now mingling come
 From within the plunder'd dome :
 Hark to the haste of flying feet,
 That splash in the blood of the slippery street ;
 But here and there, where 'vantage ground 775
 Against the foe may still be found,
 Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
 Make a pause, and turn again—
 With banded backs against the wall,
 Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 780

There stood an old man—his hairs were white,
 But his veteran arm was full of might :
 So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray
 The dead before him, on that day,
 In a semicircle lay ; 785
 Still he combated unwounded,
 Though retreating, unsurrounded.

Many a scar of former fight
 Lurk'd beneath his corslet bright ;
 But of every wound his body bore, 790
 Each and all had been ta'en before :
 Though aged, he was so iron of limb,
 Few of our youth could cope with him ;
 And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
 Outnumber'd his thin hairs of silver grey. 795
 From right to left his sabre swept :
 Many an Othman mother wept
 Sons that were unborn, when dipp'd
 His weapon first in Moslem gore,
 Ere his years could count a score. 800
 Of all he might have been the sire
 Who fell that day beneath his ire :
 For, sonless left long years ago,
 His wrath made many a childless foe ;
 And since the day, when in the strait 805
 His only boy had met his fate,
 His parent's iron hand did doom
 More than a human hecatomb.
 If shades by carnage be appeased,
 Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 810
 Than his, Minotti's son, who died
 Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
 Buried he lay, where thousands before
 For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore ;
 What of them is left, to tell 815
 Where they lie, and how they fell ?
 Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves ;
 But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout ! a band
 Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand ; 820
 Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
 Swifter to smite, and never to spare—

Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on ;
 Thus in the fight is he ever known :
 Others a gaudier garb may show, 825
 To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe ;
 Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
 But none on a steel more ruddily gilt ;
 Many a loftier turban may wear,—
 Alp is but known by the white arm bare ; 830
 Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there !
 There is not a standard on that shore
 So well advanced the ranks before ;
 There is not a banner in Moslem war
 Will lure the Delhis half so far ; 835
 It glances like a falling star !
 Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
 The bravest be, or late have been ;
 There the craven cries for quarter
 Vainly to the vengeful Tartar ; 840
 Or the hero, silent lying,
 Scorns to yield a groan in dying ;
 Mustering his last feeble blow
 'Gainst the nearest levell'd foe,
 Though faint beneath the mutual wound, 845
 Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect,
 And Alp's career a moment check'd.
 "Yield thee, Minotti ; quarter take,
 For thine own, thy daughter's sake." 850

"Never, renegado, never !
 Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."

"Francesca !—Oh, my promised bride !
 Must she too perish by thy pride !"
 "She is safe."—"Where ? where ?"—"In heaven ; 855
 From whence thy traitor soul is driven—

Far from thee, and undefiled."
 Grimly then Minotti smiled,
 As he saw Alp staggering bow
 Before his words, as with a blow.

860

"Oh God ! when died she ?"—"Yesternight—
 Nor weep I for her spirit's flight :
 None of my pure race shall be
 Slaves to Mahomet and thee—
 Come on !"—That challenge is in vain—
 Alp's already with the slain !
 While Minotti's words were wreaking
 More revenge in bitter speaking
 Than his falchion's point had found,
 Had the time allow'd to wound,
 From within the neighbouring porch
 Of a long defended church,
 Where the last and desperate few
 Would the failing fight renew,
 The sharp shot dash'd Alp to the ground ;
 Ere an eye could view the wound
 That crash'd through the brain of the infidel,
 Round he spun, and down he fell ;
 A flash like fire within his eyes
 Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,
 And then eternal darkness sunk
 Through all the palpitating trunk ;
 Nought of life left, save a quivering
 Where his limbs were slightly shivering :
 They turn'd him on his back ; his breast
 And brow were stain'd with gore and dust,
 And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
 From its deep veins lately loosed ;
 But in his pulse there was no throb,
 Nor on his lips one dying sob ;
 Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
 Heralded his way to death :

865

870

875

880

885

890

Ere his very thought could pray,
 Unanel'd he pass'd away,
 Without a hope from mercy's aid,— 895
 To the last a Renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
 Of his followers, and his foes ;
 These in joy, in fury those :
 Then again in conflict mixing, 900
 Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
 Interchanged the blow and thrust,
 Hurling warriors in the dust.
 Street by street, and foot by foot,
 Still Minotti dares dispute 905
 The latest portion of the land
 Left beneath his high command ;
 With him, aiding heart and hand,
 The remnant of his gallant band.
 Still the church is tenable, 910
 Whence issued late the fated ball
 That half avenged the city's fall,
 When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell :
 Thither bending sternly back,
 They leave before a bloody track ; 915
 And, with their faces to the foe,
 Dealing wounds with every blow,
 The chief, and his retreating train,
 Join to those within the fane ;
 There they yet may breathe awhile, 920
 Shelter'd by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time ! the turban'd host,
 With adding ranks and raging boast,
 Press onwards with such strength and heat,
 Their numbers balk their own retreat ; 925

For narrow the way that led to the spot
 Where still the Christians yielded not ;
 And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
 Through the massy column to turn and fly ;
 They perforce must do or die. 931
 They die ; but ere their eyes could close,
 Avengers o'er their bodies rose ;
 Fresh and furious, fast they fill
 The ranks unthinn'd, though slaughter'd still ;
 And faint the weary Christians wax 935
 Before the still renew'd attacks :
 And now the Othmans gain the gate ;
 Still resists its iron weight,
 And still, all deadly aim'd and hot,
 From every crevice comes the shot ; 940
 From every shatter'd window pour
 The volleys of the sulphurous shower :
 But the portal wavering grows and weak—
 The iron yields, the hinges creek—
 It bends—it falls—and all is o'er ; 945
 Lost Corinth may resist no more !

xxx.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
 Minotti stood o'er the altar stone :
 Madonna's face upon him shone,
 Painted in heavenly hues above, 950
 With eyes of light and looks of love ;
 And placed upon that holy shrine
 To fix our thoughts on things divine,
 When pictured there, we kneeling see
 Her, and the boy-God on her knee, 955
 Smiling sweetly on each prayer
 To heaven, as if to waft it there.
 Still she smiled ; even now she smiles,
 Though slaughter streams along her aisles :
 Minotti lifted his aged eye, 960

And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
 Then seized a torch which blazed thereby ;
 And still he stood, while with steel and flame,
 Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone 965
 Contain'd the dead of ages gone ;
 Their names were on the graven floor,
 But now illegible with gore ;
 The carved crests, and curious hues
 The varied marble's veins diffuse, 970
 Were smear'd, and slippery - stain'd, and strown
 With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown :
 There were dead above, and the dead below
 Lay cold in many a coffin'd row ;
 You might see them piled in sable state, 975
 By a pale light through a gloomy grate ;
 But War had enter'd their dark caves,
 And stored along the vaulted graves
 Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
 In masses by the fleshless dead : 980
 Here, throughout the siege, had been
 The Christians' chiefest magazine ;
 To these a late form'd train now led,
 Minotti's last and stern resource
 Against the foe's o'erwhelming force. 985

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
 To strive, and those must strive in vain :
 For lack of further lives, to slake
 The thirst of vengeance now awake,
 With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 990
 And lop the already lifeless head,
 And fell the statues from their niche,
 And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,

And from each other's rude hands wrest
 The silver vessels saints have bless'd. 995
 To the high altar on they go ;
 Oh, but it made a glorious show !
 On its table still behold
 The cup of consecrated gold ;
 Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 1000
 Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes :
 That morn it held the holy wine,
 Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
 Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,
 To shrive their souls ere they join'd in the fray. 1005
 Still a few drops within it lay ;
 And round the sacred table glow
 Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
 From the purest metal cast ;
 A spoil—the richest, and the last. 1010

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretch'd
 To grasp the spoil he almost reach'd,
 When Old Minotti's hand
 Touch'd with the torch the train—
 'Tis fired ! 1015
 Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
 The turban'd victors, the Christian band,
 All that of living or dead remain,
 Hurl'd on high with the shiver'd fane,
 In one wild roar expired ! 1020
 The shatter'd town—the walls thrown down—
 The waves a moment backward bent—
 The hills that shake, although unrent,
 As if an earthquake pass'd—
 The thousand shapeless things all driven 1025
 In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
 By that tremendous blast—
 Proclaim'd the desperate conflict o'er
 On that too long afflicted shore :

Up to the sky like rockets go 1030
All that mingled there below :
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorch'd and shrivell'd to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strew'd the plain : 1035
Down the ashes shower like rain ;
Some fell in the gulph, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles ;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scatter'd o'er the isthmus lay ; 1040
Christian or Moslem, which be they ?
Let their mothers see and say !
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child, 1045
Little deem'd she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more ;
That one moment left no trace 1050
More of human form or face
Save a scatter'd scalp or bone :
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dinted in the clay, 1055
All blacken'd there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
The deadly earth-shock disappear'd :
The wild birds flew ; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead ; 1060
The camels from their keepers broke ;
The distant steer forsook the yoke—
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein ;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh, 1065
Deep-mouth'd arose, and doubly harsh ;

The wolves yell'd on the cavern'd hill
Where echo roll'd in thunder still ;
The jackal's troop, in gather'd cry,
Bay'd from afar complainingly, 1070
With a mix'd and mournful sound,
Like crying babe, and beaten hound :
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun, 1075
The clouds beneath him seem'd so dun ;
Their smoke assail'd his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek—
Thus was Corinth lost and won !

NOTES.

l. 1, **In the year.** In the year of the Christian era 1810. The reference is to the poet's first expedition to Greece in 1809-10, with his friend Hobhouse and one or two attendants. **Since Jesus died.** This is an instance of Byron's carelessness, the era being usually reckoned not from the death of Christ, but from his birth. These introductory lines were written as an after-thought, and were sent to the publisher in a letter, given in Moore's Life, leaving it to his discretion whether or not they should be prefixed to the poem.

l. 6, **We forded . . . hill.** Through rivers and over mountains we rode.

l. 8, **Whether we lay . . . bed.** Alike in mountain cave or shepherd's hut, however hard our bed, sleep fell softly on our eyes.

l. 10, **Capote**, a Turkish cloak with hood.

l. 12, **our saddles spread**, with our saddles for pillows.

l. 15, **had scope**, there was room for ; there were no bounds to the free play of thought and speech, for we were full of health and of hope for the future, and no sadness mingled with the labour of our journeying.

l. 18, **We were of.** Among us were men of every language and every faith,—some monks, some Mussulmans, some Christians, and some of neither one faith nor another, if I mistake not.

l. 19, **counted beads**, that is, monks who used a rosary or string of beads. The old sense of *bead*, says Skeat, is "a prayer," and the bead was so called because used for counting prayers ; and not *vice versa*. A.S. *bed*, a prayer.

l. 21, **mis-say**, say wrongly. The A.S. prefix *mis*, which occurs in *misdeed*, *misconduct*, *mislead*, etc., is not to be confused with the O.F. prefix *mis* (properly *mes*) which occurs in *mischievous*, *misalliance*, *miscreant* (Skeat).

l. 23, **a motlier . . . blither**, a merrier company, or one of more mixed elements. *Motley*, lit. of many colours.

l. 26, **And some are rebels**, and some are carrying on a guerilla war among the mountains of Epirus. To this line Lord Byron

appends the following note: "The last tidings recently heard of Dervish (one of the Arnaouts who followed me), state him to be in revolt upon the mountains, at the head of some of the bands common in that country in times of trouble."

l. 27, **Epirus**, now part of Albania.

l. 28, **Where freedom, . . . ills**. Where now and then men still strike a blow for freedom and take vengeance on the lives of tyrants.

l. 30, **Countree**, archaic form of *country*, which is derived from the O.F. *contrée*, and ultimately from L. *contra*, over against; that is, the land in front of us.

l. 31, **all restlessly**. That is, kept idle at home while longing to be away and in action.

l. 34, **hardy days**, days of hardship.

l. 35, **fall**, in the sense of to happen or come to pass. Cf. Tennyson, "Sadly fell our Christmas Eve." In *Mem.*, xxx. 4.

l. 36, **skim the main**, fly over the surface of the sea; *lit.* the bulk of the sea, the wide open sea. Cf. *Main-land*.

l. 40, **'Tis this**. It is this backward flight of thought to happy days gone by, which always makes me sing again, entreating the few who can bear with my poor verse to go with me.

l. 44, **Stranger**, that is, the reader whom he addresses.

l. 45, **Acro-Corinth**. On the summit of the Corinthian Citadel—that is, the double peak of rock which forms the fortress of Corinth, and at the foot of which the town is situated.

l. 49, **form'd to Freedom's hands**, a fitting citadel for the cause of Freedom.

l. 52, **The keystone**. The central stone of an arch is called the keystone, as locking the whole structure together. So Corinth is called the Key of Greece from her central and commanding position.

l. 54, **the double tide**. The Citadel of Corinth stands on the narrow isthmus between the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs.

l. 56, **chafed to meet**, as though the waves on either side were fretting that they were kept apart, yet stood arrested by the towering rock.

l. 58, **But could the blood**. But if all the blood shed before the walls of Corinth, from the days of Timoleon until now, were to rise again from the earth, the whole isthmus would be engulfed in the flood; so, were the bones of all the slain in Corinthian battles heaped up together, they would make a mountain higher than the citadel itself.

l. 59, **Timoleon**, a Corinthian noble so devoted to the cause of liberty that he murdered his own brother on his attempting to make himself tyrant. He subsequently became ruler of Sicily after banishing the tyrants from the Greek cities of the island.

l. 60, **Persia's despot**, *sc.* Xerxes, who invaded Greece, and was defeated at the battle of Salamis, B.C. 480.

l. 63, **sanguine ocean**, sea of blood.

l. 64, **idly**, striving in vain to stem the tide.

l. 67, **rival**, *sc.* rivalling the citadel.

l. 71, **dun . . . ridge**, on the dark slope of Cithæron : **Cithæron**, a mountain in Boeotia, north of Corinth.

l. 73, **Isthmian plain**. The plain on the Isthmus of Corinth, where the great national festival of the Isthmian games was held in ancient days.

l. 74, **either main**, each gulf, *sc.* the Corinthian and Saronic.

l. 75, **the crescent shines**. The crescent moon, the badge of Mahommedanism, surmounting the standards of the Turkish army.

l. 76, **leaguering**, *sc.* beleaguering, besieging : **leaguer** - camp (Dutch).

l. 77, **Spahi**, *i.q.* Persian, *sipahi*, soldier.

l. 78, **pacha**, *i.q.* Pers. *padishah*, chief commander.

l. 80, **cohorts**, regiments, Lat. *cohors*, a division of the Roman army.

l. 82, **the Tartar wheels**. The Tartar cavalry go through their evolutions.

l. 83, **The Turcoman**. The nomad tribes of Turkistan are turned from shepherds into soldiers.

l. 85, **volleying thunders**. The thunder of cannon in volleys; volley is from F. *volée*, a *flight* of shot.

l. 86, **Till waves**. Till the very sea is silenced by the din.

l. 87, **The trench**, *sc.* the lines of siege-entrenchment.

l. 88, **globe of death**, the death-dealing cannon ball, hissing through the air.

l. 93, **With fires . . . Infidel**. With quick and true response of fire to the challenge of the Turk ; that is, the guns of the fortress reply promptly and with true aim to those of the enemy ; **fires**, cannon shots.

l. 94, **summons**, *sc.* the call to surrender.

l. 97, **war's black art**, the black arts are the devices of the devil, that is, of the powers of darkness ; the term is usually applied to the arts of magic or enchantment.

l. 98, **Than Othman's sons**. A better soldier than any Turk. The Ottoman Turks are so called from Othman Al Ghazi, the founder of the dynasty now reigning at Constantinople, who died in 1326, and was famed not only as a conqueror, but for his moderation and justice : **high of heart**, full of exulting hope.

l. 103, **Where sallying ranks . . . quail**. Where the advance guard of the Turks is pressed hard by a charge of the besiegers on the lines of entrenchment : **quail**, shrink.

l. 107, **Alighting cheerly.** Calmly dismounting to put fresh courage in the infantry when their firing is being silenced.

l. 110, **Stamboul**, or **Istamboul**, is the Turkish name for Constantinople: these can boast, the finest soldiers of all in the Sultan's army.

l. 112, **To point the tube**, to level the cannon.

l. 113, **bickering**, quivering, waving.

l. 114, **The Adrian renegade**, the Venetian apostate. Adria was an ancient seaport, between the Po and the Adige, which gave the name to the Adriatic sea, of which the Gulf of Venice forms the northern extremity: **renegade** from Spanish *renegado*, an apostate, one who has denied and forsaken the faith.

l. 115, **once . . . sires.** The construction of this explanatory parenthesis is absolute; his well-born forefathers being men who had proved their worth in bygone days: **gentle**, M.E. *gentil*, of noble birth.

l. 117, **late**, latterly.

l. 120, **The turban . . . brow.** Now his head was shaven and bound by a Turkish turban.

l. 121, **Thro' many a change.** After the destruction of the Achaean league by the Romans, B.C. 146, the Peloponnesus formed part of the Roman province of Achaia, and remained subject to Rome till the division of the Empire. It afterwards belonged to the Byzantine Emperors till the beginning of the 13th century, when the Franks having conquered Constantinople the Venetians obtained for their share a considerable part of the Peloponnesus, including Corinth, and gave the peninsula the name Morea (the Mulberry land). Nearly three centuries later the Venetians were expelled by the Ottomans. In 1682 the Morea was conquered by the Venetians, and in 1715 the country was again recovered by the Turks.

l. 127, **Within whose . . . wrongs.** With heart inflamed by crowded memories of injustice and ill-usage.

l. 130, **Her ancient civic boast**, had ceased to bear out her citizens' boast of freedom. The Republic of Venice figured for more than a thousand years as an independent state, and played a prominent part in the history of Europe.

l. 131, **in the palace of St Mark.** The palace of the Doges or Dukes of Venice, a massive building on the great square of St. Mark (the patron saint of Venice), which was the seat of the ancient Government, and contains the halls of the various councils. The great hall of the Council of Ten is now a picture gallery, containing masterpieces of Italian art, in commemoration of events in Venetian history, and including a series of portraits of the Doges. In the attics and on the ground floor of the palace were the state prisons and dungeons.

l. 133, **Within the Lion's mouth.** The administration of justice in the Venetian Republic was conducted in absolute secrecy. The "Council of Ten," established in 1310, "was chiefly known," says Hallam "as an arbitrary and inquisitorial tribunal, the standing tyranny of Venice The public eye never penetrated the mystery of their proceedings; the accused was sometimes not heard, never confronted with witnesses; the condemnation was secret as the inquiry, the punishment undivulged like both." A paper containing any charge against any person was placed secretly and without signature in the "lion's mouth," that is, a hole in the wall of the Doge's palace, which originally formed the mouth of a sculptured lion's head, whence it passed into the hands of the council, and on the strength of a charge so made the accused became liable to punishment.

l. 134, **uneffaced**, that is, which had never been withdrawn.

l. 135, **in time**, *sc.* to escape arrest.

l. 136, **to waste**, only that he might waste; that is, throw away, in the service of the enemy and the infidel, the years which ought to have been devoted to the cause of his own country, and the true faith.

l. 137, **That taught.** In struggles from which his country learnt what a gallant soldier she had lost in him.

l. 140, **battled . . . die**, and fought to take vengeance for his wrongs at peril of his life.

l. 141, **Coumourgi.** "Ali Coumourgi, the favourite of three sultans and Grand Vizier to Achmet III., after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin (in the plain of Carlowitz) in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of General Brenner, and some other German prisoners; and his last words 'oh! that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs,' a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption. On being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, was a great general, he said 'I shall become a greater, and at his expense.'"—Author's note.

l. 142, **Eugene.** Prince Eugene of Savoy, a Frenchman by birth, renounced his allegiance to France, and entering the service of Leopold, Emperor of Austria, became the most distinguished of Austrian generals. He was first distinguished in the wars against the Turks, ending with the peace of Carlowitz, 1699, but especially by his services in the war of the Spanish succession, co-operating with the English under Marlborough, and commanding the Austrian troops at the battle of Blenheim in 1704.

l. 146, **cursed**, this is a sudden and irregular change of con-

struction to suit the metre. The regular sequence to "regretting" would have been "cursing."

1. 150, **of yore**, M.E. from A.S., *geára*, formerly ; long years ago.

1. 152, **refixed**, since he re-imposed the sovereignty of the Turk.

1. 154, **van**, the advance guard—from F. *avant*, in front.

1. 155, **repaid the trust**, justified by the destruction of city after city the confidence placed in him.

1. 158, **How firm . . . faith**. How true was his conversion to the newly-embraced Moslem faith.

1. 159, **fast and hot**, both words are here used as adverbs : **hot**, that is, persistently, without pause, as in the phrase a hot pursuit.

1. 162, **From battery to battlement**. Hurling in one furious cannonade against the fortress wall.

1. 163, **pealing din**, the deafening roar ; *peal* is a shortened form of appeal, a summons, loud sound.

1. 164, **heated**, *sc.* by the incessant firing : **Culverin**, a sort of cannon. The word is derived through the French, from Lat. *colubra*, fem. of *coluber*, a snake, from the long thin form of the gun ; so another kind of cannon was called a "serpentine."

1. 165, **crackling dome . . . bomb**. Now and again was heard the roar of some burning roof set on fire by a bursting shell ; "crackling" is used proleptically ; the dome did not crackle till it was set fire to.

1. 168, **volcanic**, like the smoke of a volcano.

1. 169, **wreathing columns . . . crashed**, red tongues of flame encircled the building as it fell with a crash.

1. 171, **Or into . . . heaven**. Bursting like a meteor into a thousand sparks, was lost in the sky.

1. 174, **hidden**, *sc.* by the smoke.

1. 175, **volumed**, smoke rolling in huge columns.

1. 177, **But not . . . alone**. But it was not only the long pent-up thirst for revenge that urged the pervert-leader.

1. 180, **to pierce . . . breath**, in effecting a breach at the point he showed them ; "to pierce," that is, in piercing, an example of the infinitive used indefinitely.

1. 181, **pent**, for penned, p.p. of pen to shut up. A.S. *pennan*, ultimately of lat. origin (Skeat).

1. 182, **His hope . . . claim**. Whose hand he hoped to gain in spite of her father's angry and obstinate refusal when, as a Christian, Alp preferred his suit. The relative "whom" is here omitted, as so often in poetry.

1. 185, **his Christian name**, *sc.* Lanciotto, see below, l. 199.

1. 187, **mood**, disposition of mind, temper.

1. 188, **While unimpeached**, before he had been charged with treachery.

l. 189, **Gayest . . . carnival.** Gayest of the gay, he was the star of the Carnival fêtes alike on shore and afloat: **gondola**, the long black covered boat used on the canals of Venice, in place of carriages, those canals answering to the roadways of other cities.

l. 190, **Carnival.** The feast held just before the annual Christian fast of Lent. The word is derived ultimately from Lat. *caro, carnis*, flesh, and *lætare*, to lighten; a consolation to the flesh (Skeat). In his *Beppo*, Byron gives a mistaken etymology of this word, from *caro*, flesh, and *vale*, farewell:

"This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh.'"

l. 191, **serenade**, F. from Lat. *serenus*, music played under a lady's windows, in the fresh, cool evening.

l. 195, **For sought . . . unchained.** Because many as were the suitors for her hand, she had remained still unmarried.

l. 198, **When the Adriatic.** When her lover sailed down the Adriatic to the land of the Infidel. **Lanciotto.** The Christian name of Alp before he turned Mahomedan: **Paynim**, pagan, heathen, that is non-Christian (Lat. *paganus*, a villager). The English use of the word is, says Skeat, "due to a singular mistake. A *paynim* is not a man but a country; it is identical with *paganism*, which was formerly extended to mean the country of pagans, or heathen lands."

l. 202, **More constant . . . festival**, going oftener to confess her sins to the priest, less often seen in the dance or fête: **confessional.** In Roman Catholic churches a small enclosed cell is provided in which the priest sits at stated times to hear the confessions of his congregation, the penitent kneeling and speaking through a grating into the ear of the priest and unseen by him: **masque**, F., Masquerade or masked ball, a dance where the dancers disguise themselves in masks. The original meaning of the word is, however, entertainment; the use of the mask being, says Skeat, "from an etymological point of view, an accident."

l. 205, **Which conquered.** Whose beauty won the hearts of men, a conquest on which she placed no value now.

l. 206, **listless, careless.** The old form is *lustless*, without desire.

l. 207, **humbler care**, more simple and less careful in her dress.

l. 210, **The pairs.** The couples of dancers, still dancing at daybreak with unabated vigour.

l. 212, **Sent by the state.** Minotti was the Venetian Governor of Corinth.

l. 214, **Sobieski.** John Sobieski, born in 1629, was the most distinguished soldier and the last of the patriot Kings of Poland. He freed his country again and again from the Cossacks and

Tartars on one side and from the Turks on the other, and in 1683 in alliance with the Germans raised the siege of Vienna when invested by the Turkish army.

l. 216, **wrung away**, took from the Turks by force of arms.

l. 217, **Patra**, the ancient Patræ on the North coast of the Morea: **Eubœa**, mod. Negropont, an island off the coast of Attica and Bœotia. The reference is to the victories of Morosini the Venetian general, afterwards Doge of Venice, who in 1687 defeated the Turks near Patras and conquered the whole of the Morea.

ll. 218, 9, **held . . . delegated powers**, acted as agent or viceroy for the Doge.

l. 222, **that faithless truce**, the peace of Carlowitz by which in 1699 Turkey restored Greece to Venice.

l. 225, **since Menelaus' dame**. Since Helen, wife of Menelaus, fled with Paris to Troy: **dame**, through the F. from Lat. *domina*.

l. 227, **await on**, lie in wait for, are sure to follow.

l. 228, **Had fairer form**. No lovelier face had been seen than that of the peerless foreigner, Minotti's daughter.

l. 230, **yawn**, gape open, that is, where a breach has been made.

l. 232, **the disjointed mass**, over the shattered mound the leader of the attack shall leap.

l. 234, **The bands are ranked**. To each section of the force its place is assigned, the foremost place being given to the Tartars and Mahommedans.

l. 235, **Tartar**, a word of Persian origin. The true spelling, says Trench, is *Tatar*, the spelling *Tartar* being due to a false etymology, because their multitudes were supposed to have come from *Tartarus* or hell.

l. 236, **The full of hope, misnamed forlorn**. "A forlorn hope" is the phrase used by the storming-party which leads the first assault on the walls of a besieged town, or undertakes any other desperate duty. In this phrase the word *hope* is from Dutch *hoop*, a troop, and signifies "the lost or devoted band." Byron here assumes the wrong explanation as though it were men "the hope of whose safety is a forlorn one."

l. 238, **falchion**, a curved, sickle-shaped sword, from Lat. *fulx*, a sickle: **corse**, a variant of *corpse*, a body.

l. 240, **o'er which . . . dies**; over which the gallant comrades that come after them may climb, planting their steps on the bodies of the last to fall as they approach.

l. 246, **Bespangled**. Verb formed from *spangle* "a small plate of shining metal"; dotted with glittering islands. (*Cf.* Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*, iv. 5. 31.

"What stars do spangle Heaven with such beauty
As those two eyes become that heavenly face?"

also *Merchant of Venice*, v. 1. 59.

“look how the floor of Heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.”

Cf. also Spenser, *Faery Queene*, ii. 3. 26.

“golden aygulets that glistred bright,
Like twinkling stars”

1. 247, **So wildly**, burning with a light at once so brilliant and so unearthly.

1. 249, **repining**, without a pang of discontent.

1. 251, **mix with**, and lose himself in their everlasting light. *Cf.* Tennyson, *Locksley Hall 60 Years After*, l. 191.

“Might we not, in glancing heavenward, on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn and clasp the hands and murmur ‘Would to God that
we were there’?”

1. 252, **on either shore**, on each side of the isthmus.

1. 253, **azure**, blue (Arab.).

1. 256, **were pillowed**, slept calmly.

1. 257, **The banners . . . curling**. The colours hung idly in the still air, clinging to the staff in folds, from among which rose the circling crescent.

1. 260, **was unbroke**, was broken only by the sentry's pass-word or the neighing of horses echoed back from the mountains: **unbroke**, here, as above in line 222, the obsolete past tense form is used, instead of the past participle “unbroken.”

1. 265, **from coast to coast**, across the isthmus from sea to sea.

1. 266, **Muezzin**, Arab. The Mahommedan crier who calls the faithful to prayer at the appointed hour.

1. 267, **wonted**, accustomed. The word *wont* is “properly the p.p. of *won* to dwell, to be used to. When the fact that it was a p.p. was forgotten, it came to be used as a substantive; and then by way of distinction, a new form *wonted* was evolved, to keep up the p.p. use. Hence *won-t-ed* (= won-ed-ed) has the suffix *ed* twice over!” (Skeat).

1. 268, **that chanted mournful strain**. The murmured prayers of the besieging army.

1. 271, **when winds and harp-strings meet**, referring to the Æolian harp, a harp from which a wild music is drawn by the winds sweeping over the chords; so called from Æolus, god of the winds. The harp is described in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*:

“From which . . . the god of winds draws sounds of deep delight;
Whence, with just cause, the harp of Æolus it hight.”

1. 272, **And take . . . tone**, and give forth a long-drawn strain no human musician may interpret.

l. 277, **something ominous and drear**, it had a sound of unearthly portent.

l. 278, **thrill, shock**. To thrill is strictly to pierce.

l. 281, **Of that strange sense**, of the mysterious feeling that followed as it ceased to beat.

l. 282, **Such as . . . knell**. A sensation such as one feels who on a sudden hears the passing bell, unknown though he may be for whom it tolls : **passing bell**, the bell tolled for the dying, as the soul "passes" from the body—a Christian custom still retained, the bell, however, being tolled as soon as death has taken place. *Of. Shakespeare, vi. Henry iv., i. l. 102.*

". . . a sullen bell,
Remembered knolling a departing friend."

The origin and meaning of the custom is disputed, one explanation being that the bell was intended to scare away demons from the soul of the dying. *See* Deighton's note to this passage in *King Henry iv.*

l. 285, **The Sound**, *sc.* of the call to prayer, the *azan*.

l. 286, **the watch was set**. The sentries were posted in their appointed places : **The night-round**, the officers had gone the round of the guards.

l. 289, **His pains**. To-morrow perchance his trouble will have its reward in the full satisfaction of vengeance and lust.

l. 291, **guerdon**, reward, recompense, F.

l. 293, **to nerve**,—used in a neuter sense—to brace his nerves ; to give him strength.

l. 296, **He stood alone**. There was none in all the army to share his thoughts.

l. 297, **Not his . . . immortally**. He could not share the Mussulman's enthusiasm for the triumph of Islam, or lay down his life like him in sure and certain hope of everlasting happiness in the arms of Houris : **fanatic**, religiously insane. The word is derived through the French from Lat. *fanum*, a temple (*Skeat*).

l. 301, **Houris**, virgins of Paradise (Pers.). (*cf. Giaour*,

"But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite,
And the dark Heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright."

l. 302, **Nor his . . . toil**. His was no iron enthusiasm as of one fired with love of country, careless alike of labour and of life.

l. 312, **crouched**, they cowered before him, for he knew how to mould to his purpose the wills of men.

l. 313, **warp**, to twist, M.E. *werpen*, to throw. The subst. warp. (*lit.* that which is thrown) is the thread stretched lengthwise in a

loom, to be crossed by the woof (Skeat): **vulgar will**, the will of the common herd.

l. 316, **faithless fame**, the fame he owed to the denial of his faith.

l. 319, **a bitter Nazarene**, a Christian full of bitter hatred: **Nazarene**, follower of Jesus of Nazareth; used contemptuously.

l. 320, **how pride can stoop**, to what meanness the proud man will lower himself. For an excellent example of this use of abstract for concrete, cf. Shakespeare's *King Lear*, act i. sc. 1. 131.

"Thinkst thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,
When Majesty stoops to folly."

l. 321, **When baffled . . . droop**. When love unreturned dies of inanition: **baffled**. The word, says Skeat, is clearly a corruption of Lowland Scotch *bauchle*, to treat contemptuously, and is derived ultimately from the Icelandic.

l. 325, **The convert of revenge**. One turned from his faith by lust of vengeance.

l. 326, **may rule the worst**, he who has the courage to lead may control the most lawless.

l. 329, **The jackal points**. The jackal serves as pointer, the lion springs on the game. To "point" is used of a dog trained to give notice of the presence of game to the sportsman by standing still, with lifted fore-paw, facing the quarter where he has perceived it: **fells**, throws down. M.E. from A.S. *fellan*.

l. 330, **the vulgar**, the pack follows eager in full cry, to feast on the fragments of the prey.

l. 332, **his pulse**, his blood courses wildly through his veins.

l. 333, **convulse**, agitate violently. Lat. *convellere*, to pluck.

l. 334, **In vain**, . . . **repose**, it is in vain that he tosses restlessly, longing for sleep.

l. 335, **In courtship**; to court is to woo, seek favour as a lover; orig. to practise arts in vogue at court (Skeat).

l. 336, **dozed**, fell half asleep (Scand.): **sunken**, hollow, p.p. of M.E. *sinken*.

l. 339, **mail**, chain armour, through F. from Lat. *macula*, a spot, hole, mesh of a net.

l. 342, **Without . . . spread**. With neither bed nor curtain—unless one could imagine a harder bed or darker covering than his to-night. **Canopy**, a covering overhead; strictly a bed with mosquito-curtains. The word is derived (through French, Italian, and Latin) ultimately from Greek *Konops*, a mosquito (the cone-headed gnat) (Skeat).

l. 349, **thousand sleepers**. Where his men lay in thousands on the shore.

1. 350, **What pillowed them?** They had no softer pillow than he. Cf. Shakespeare, *ii. Henry iv.*, act iii. sc. 1. 4.

“How many thou and of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,
Nature’s soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, best thou in smoky cribs
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush’d with lowing louds to thy slumber,
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody?”

1. 352, **more**, *sc.* than his own,—though it is hard to say wherein their peril was greater than his own, except perhaps in more arduous physical labour.

1. 356, **in sickly vigil**, while he lay ill and sleepless, full of restless and disordered thoughts.

1. 358, **He felt . . . night**. As he breathed the fresh night air the burden seemed lifted from his soul.

1. 361, **airy balm**, with the soft dew of heaven: **balm**, a contracted form of *balsam*, an aromatic plant, a word of Greek origin.

1. 364, **Lepanto’s gulf**. The gulf of Corinth, Lepanto being a town at its mouth.

1. 365, **Delphi’s hill**, that is, Mount Parnassus, on the south side of which Delphi was situated, famous for the oracle of Apollo. Parnassus, the highest mountain in Central Greece, was visible from the citadel of Corinth, a distance of about 80 miles, and is covered with snow for the greater part of the year.

1. 367, **brightly gone**, a thousand brilliant summers of the past.

1. 368, **the clime**, the slope (from the plain to the mountain)—(Greek). This is the primary meaning of the word; whence a zone or region of the earth.

1. 369, **It will not melt . . . time**. It does not yield as man does to the influence of time, but remains immortal.

1. 370, **Tyrant and slave**. Despots and their down-trodden subjects alike pass away, less able even than the snow to resist the influence of the sun.

1. 372, **But that white veil**. But the pure snow-drift that greets thee from the towering mountain-side shines on its rocky fortress, unmoved by storm and hurricane.

1. 373, **thou hailest**: “thou” is impersonal, “which one hails”; that is, which you greet as distinguishing Parnassus from the surrounding heights.

1. 376, **In form a peak**. The summit of Parnassus is a double peak, in the hollow of which was the Castalian spring.

1. 377, **hovering shroud**, like a flowing winding-sheet.

l. 378, **by parting Freedom**, by Freedom when she took her flight; that is, when the country became subject to the Turks.

l. 380, **where long . . . song**, where for many long years she had given forth the inspired poetry of her oracles, *sc.* by the voice of the Delphic priestess.

l. 382, **her step . . . falters**, still now and again she passes with tottering step; that is, revisits for a moment, like a departed spirit, her ancient haunts.

l. 384, **fain would wake**, longing to revive in her people's crushed heart.

l. 385, **each glorious token**, the monuments of their former greatness.

l. 387, **in those yet remember'd rays**. With the never forgotten glory of those days when Xerxes fled and Leonidas laid down his life with a smile. The reference is to the defeat of Xerxes, B.C. 480, and to the gallant defence of the pass of Thermopylæ against the whole Persian army by a small band of Spartans under Leonidas.

l. 391, **despite**, *propt.*, in spite of, notwithstanding. The word is primarily a substantive *mahee*, through F. from Lat. *despicere*, to despise: **flight**, *sc.* from Venice.

l. 395, **in better cause**, for a more worthy object than that for which he was fighting: **accrue**, grow to, come to, F. from Lat. *accrescere*.

l. 399, **A traitor . . . horde**. False Christian in the Moslem camp: **horde** (Turk.), a wandering tribe—first applied to the Tartars.

l. 400, **the lawless siege . . . sacrilege**. The campaign of sin, whose crowning triumph could but lay in the profanation of a holy place.

l. 401, **were, would be**: **sacrilege**, from Lat. *sacrilegium*, robbery of a temple, stealing of sacred things; so applied to any profanation of the kind.

l. 402, **Not so . . . numbered**. It was not thus they fought,—the heroes of old whose names were passing through his brain.

l. 404, **Their phalanx . . . vain**. When their troops mustered on the plain which their courage kept that day inviolate. **Phalanx**, the Greek name for a body of heavy infantry in close order. Then soldiers of the phalanx were armed with long spears, the spears of the rear ranks projecting beyond the front rank, a dense mass of spears being thus presented to the enemy.

l. 406, **devoted, but undying**. Willingly they laid down their lives, yet live for ever in the hearts of men.

l. 410, **The silent pillar, . . . clay**. The ruined column . . . stood proudly conscious of kinship with the holy dead (now turned to dust).

l. 412, **Their spirits wrapp'd.** The dark mountains seemed enfolded in their shadowy forms.

l. 413, **Their memory . . . fountain.** The fountain spray was eloquent of their names.

l. 416, **Despite . . . theirs.** Let her burdens be ever so grievous, still Greece is hallowed by her ancient glory, still the land of her heroes of old.

l. 418, **a watch-word,** to all men still a name of inspiration.

l. 421, **So sanction'd,** and with that bright example before him stamps tyranny underfoot.

l. 422, **He looks to her.** Remembering her heroism he takes heart to risk his life in Freedom's cause.

l. 424, **mutely mused,** stood in silent thought, as he drank in the cool night air : **mused,** to muse is to meditate, be pensive ; M.E. *musen* from O.F. *muse*, the snout of an animal ; the image, says Skeat, being that of a dog snuffing idly about.

l. 426, **tideless sea.** The Mediterranean, though not strictly tideless (having a slight rise and fall), is peculiar in experiencing no marked ebb or flow of tide.

l. 428, **So that, . . . rood.** Notice the sudden change of metre to express the leaping of the waves,—an instance of the employment of metre to aid in the vivid presentation of the thought. Cf. Shelley's *Skylark*,

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

where the form and wording of the line are intended to imitate the song of the bird.

l. 429, **for a rood,** encroach not a step inland : **rood**, strictly a fourth of an acre.

l. 430, **The powerless moon.** Referring to the fact that the moon whose attraction elsewhere causes the changes of tide, has (practically) no power over the waters of the Mediterranean.

l. 434, **The rock unworn.** The rock stands naked to its base, smooth and unfurrowed by the tide.

l. 435, **surf (E),** the foam of the sea. "This," says Skeat, "is an extremely difficult word, being disguised by a false spelling." The original word seems to have been **suffe**, "a phonetic spelling of the word usually spelt **sough**, that is "rush" or "rushing noise."

l. 436, **And the fringe, . . . ago.** The meaning is, that whereas in a tidal sea the mark left on the sand by the surf when the tide recedes varies from day to day, and from tide to tide, here, where there is no such change of tide, the surf-line remains always unchanged.

l. 438, **A smooth short space.** Nom. absol.

l. 441, **within the range,** within short gunshot range : **carbine,**

a short, light gun, used nowadays by cavalry ; an earlier meaning is a man armed with a carbine, a musketeer.

l. 442, **leaguered**, *i. q.* beleaguered, besieged.

l. 444, **lurk**, lie hid in the Christian fort.

l. 446, **sooth**, truth, E. from A.S.

l. 448, **the bastion's frown**, the threatening towers that command on either side the gate facing the sea.

l. 451, **sullen words**, the stern voice of the sentry.

l. 455, **carnival**, holding high feast on the bodies of the slain.
Of. note to line 190 supra.

l. 456, **Gorging and growling**, snarling as they feasted.

l. 460, "This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in *Hobhouse's Travels*. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janissaries."—Author's note.

l. 461, **when their edge grew dull**, when blunted with gnawing.

l. 462, **mumbled**, turned in their mouths.

l. 463, **scarce could rise**, *sc.* because so glutted with food.

l. 464, **so well . . . repast**, so had they gorged themselves after long fasting on the bodies of the newly slain.

l. 467, **of these**, *sc.* of the wild dog's prey.

l. 468, **crimson and green**. Colours specially favoured by Mahomedans. "Green is the privileged colour of the prophet's numerous pretended descendants." Note to *Giaour*.

l. 469, **a single long tuft**. The head being shaved after Mahomedan fashion, excepting a single tuft allowed to grow long, in the belief that by this Mahomet will draw the wearer into Paradise.

l. 471, **maw**, stomach.

l. 474, **flapping**, beating off with his wings.

l. 475, **stolen**, crept secretly.

l. 476, **scared**, frightened.

l. 480, **shaken**, intrins., never had his courage failed him in battle.

l. 481, **brook**, endure, bear.

l. 483, **in vain**, in hopeless agony.

l. 484, **perishing**, than the crumbling bodies of the dead whose pains are over.

l. 485, 6, **There is something . . . lower**, that is, the sight of death on the battle-field is bearable, because the glory of the soldier's death blinds us to its horror, however terrible it may be : **lower**, frown upon them.

l. 487, **to say who bleeds . . . deeds**. For while life remains, the hero's name may still be known, and glory follows on deeds of valour.

l. 490, **weltering**, where the dead lie unburied and rolling in blood. Note that the epithet "weltering" is transferred (by a practice common in poetry) from the dead to the field.

l. 498, **granite**, a very hard speckled stone.

l. 501, **Out upon time**. Shame upon.

l. 506, **Fragments . . . clay**. Ruins of stone built by men sprung from dust of the earth.

l. 507, **base**, at foot of a column.

l. 510, **declining**, in a dejected attitude.

l. 512, **Fever'd . . . oppressed**, aching with fever and care.

l. 515, **as you may see . . . key**. As those of some musician when he sweeps the piano notes till he beats out the air he seeks.

l. 519, **There he sate**. This passage to the end of the stanza bears so close and remarkable a likeness to a passage in Coleridge's *Christabel* that on account of this (and of other parts of the poem, bearing a similar resemblance) it is assumed by Moore in his biography that Byron had Coleridge's poem in his mind. As regards this passage, however, we have a distinct denial of the charge by Byron in the following note: "I must here acknowledge a close though unintentional resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr Coleridge called 'Christabel.' It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited; and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist."

It does not follow that we do not find clear echoes of *Christabel* in other passages of the poem, notably in the introductory lines.

l. 522, **moan**, a low sound of pain.

l. 524, **may be**, can possibly be.

l. 525, **waved** is here used as an active verb.

l. 530, **bespeak**, portend, foretell, what was the meaning of. The more ordinary modern sense of the word is to secure by asking beforehand.

l. 531, **is he sure of sight**, as we should say, "do his eyes deceive him?" is he sure of the correctness of his sight?

l. 538, **refused to sign**, to make the sign of the cross, *sc.* with the finger on the breast, a pious act of Christians at a moment of danger, supposed to avert evil.

l. 539, **no more divine**, to him no longer the cross of a divine Saviour.

l. 540, **he had resumed**, once more he had tried to make the mystic sign, but the consciousness of his apostasy struck his hand powerless.

l. 546, **The rosé**. The colour had not left her cheek, but only grown softer and more delicate.

l. 548, **Where was the play.** Only her lips were motionless, and without the wonted smile.

l. 550, **The ocean's calm.** More blue her eyes than the calm sea that lay below : **their**, sc. of the two lovers.

l. 555, **nought**, in no wise.

l. 556, **the parting**, revealed between the downward-streaming lengths of her dark hair.

l. 561, **It was so wan . . . through.** So colourless it was, and of such shadowy tint, that the moonlight might pass through it.

l. 566, **Sought thee in safety**, sought you out and safely found you : **foes and all**, even through the ranks of the enemy ; "and all" is used intensively.

l. 567, **'Tis said.** The reference is to the story of "Una and the lion ;" see Spenser's *Faery Queene*, iii. 5, 6.

" It fortun'd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddenly,
Hunting full greedily after salvage blood.
Soon as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have att once devourd her tender corse ;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.
In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And licht her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weat."

l. 568, **in the pride of her purity**, safe under the proud shield of virtue.

l. 569, **And the Power.** And God who thus knows how to guard his children from the lion.

l. 570, **tyrant of the wood**, the lion, king of the forest,

Lord of everie beast in field.—*Faery Queene.*

l. 572, **as well**, me also.

l. 576, **falling away from**, forsaking the faith of thy fathers.

l. 577, **dash . . . to earth**, cast off the garb of the infidel and make the mystic sign.

l. 579, **wring the black drop**, purge thy soul once for all of its dark taint.

l. 580, **to-morrow unites us**, and to-morrow I will be your bride (sc. in Paradise, though to him the vision was of earthly happiness).

l. 584, **Shrines**, altars, Lat. *scrinium*, a chest, sc. in which sacred things are deposited (Skeat).

l. 586, **upon the morn**, upon the morrow.

l. 590, **quelled the pride**, when once more I have humbled Venice to the dust : **quelled**, crushed, subdued.

l. 592, **Have felt the arm.** When her accursed sons whose villanies and jealousies made me their enemy shall have writhed beneath the chastisement of him whom they sought to humble.

l. 593, **Scourge**, infin.: **whip of scorpions**, the expression used by Rehoboam, son of Solomon, King of Israel, to his subjects who prayed for "less grievous" service than they had had to render to his father. "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." 1 Kings, 12, 14.

l. 597, **shot a chillness . . . start.** Sent through his body an icy chill that robbed him even of the power to wince with fear.

l. 599, **mortal**, so deadly cold.

l. 601, **never did clasp**, no grasp of loving hand was ever known so to make the blood run cold.

l. 604, **through**, *adv.*, froze his blood through and through, completely.

l. 606, **sank** so still, so faint grew the beating of his heart.

l. 609, **Fair but faint.** Still beautiful but ghostly, and wanting the light of intelligence: **ray**, beam of light, Lat. *radius*.

l. 610, **play**, giving life to the features as the sun to the rippling sea.

l. 614, **There rose not a heave.** The shapely rounded breast showed no rise and fall, no life-blood throbbed in the veins.

l. 617, **unmixed with aught of change**, with no change of expression: **aught**, that is, a whit, anything, from A.S. *wiht*, meaning (1) a wight, person, (2) a whit, bit (Skeat).

l. 619, **of the restless**, . . . **dream**, that is, sleep-walkers.

l. 620, **Like the figures . . . air.** Like woven figures on a tapestried wall, staring sullenly down as they wave in the cold winter draught. Cf. Lamb's Essay on *Blakesmoor in H-shire*, "The tapestried bedrooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots; at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages:" **arras**, tapestry hung on walls, so called from Arras, a town in the north of France, where it was first made.

l. 626, **fearfully**, that is, striking fear into the beholder.

l. 627, **As the guests**, *sc.* at the close of some entertainment, when the lamps are burning low and the guests are going away: **tapestry**, carpet-work with figures worked on it, from F. *tapisserie*, from *tapis* a carpet, a word derived ultimately from Greek.

l. 629, **Thus much.** So much as I ask, viz.—to abandon his apostasy.

l. 632, **Thine injured country's sons.** To strike no blow against the countrymen thou hast betrayed.

- l. 633, **Or thou art lost.** Else thy doom is sealed.
- l. 635, **albeit**, that is, all (though) it be, *i.g.* although,—let it be granted, notwithstanding.
- l. 636, **doom**, judgment, fate.
- l. 637, **absolve**, atone for, expiate.
- l. 638, **Mercy's gate.** The doors of Heaven may yet be opened to thee.
- l. 640, **Him thou didst forsake.** The curse of the Saviour whom thou hast denied.
- l. 641, **and look**, . . . **thee**, and if you hesitate so long as even to take one glance, you will see, etc.
- l. 645, **Vapoury sail.** If when this passing veil of cloud has left the moon's face clear.
- l. 646, **shaded**, here used proleptically; not her orb which is usually shaded, but her orb when thus shaded by the vapoury veil.
- l. 648, **Are both avenged**, *sc.* will be; the fact is spoken of as already completed, the present tense expressing the instantaneous effect. At the same moment will God and man alike take vengeance for thy sin; that is, thy fate will be sealed, to be slain by man whom thou hast betrayed, and suffer eternal damnation at the hand of God, whom thou hast forsaken.
- l. 652, **The sign**, *sc.* the cloud passing across the moon.
- l. 653, **But his heart . . . pride.** His perverse heart was filled with unbounded pride.
- l. 655, **This first false passion.** This passion which from the first had seized upon him, and led him astray with thoughts of vengeance.
- l. 657, **He sue.** The construction is elliptical. Was he to beg for mercy, or be frightened by, etc. : **sue**, from *F. suivre*, to follow, *sc.* as petitioner or claimant.
- l. 659, **Wrong'd by Venice.** He had been driven to fly from Venice by the secret charges of his enemies.
- l. 660, **devoted**, doomed to death.
- l. 661, **though that**, . . . **worst**, even if that light cloud were the blackest of thunder-clouds.
- l. 662, **charged**, loaded; that is, though bearing a deadly thunder-bolt.
- l. 664, **accent**, a murmur, whisper.
- l. 668, **changeling**, a hybrid word with E suffix (*Skeat*). The dimin. termination conveys a contemptuous sense, as in hireling, underling, etc., "I am no turn-coat." The commoner sense of the word is, a child changed in his cradle by fairies. See *Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1. 23 :—

“ —she as her attendant hath,
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling.”

l. 669, **The reed**. I am no weakling reed, to bend and tremble before the storms of fate; like the oak I stand unmoved to be rent in pieces: **shiver**, to be broken into *shivers* or small pieces,—a distinct word from *shiver*, to tremble or shudder.

l. 672, **save**, except.

l. 675, **column stone**, the stone pillar. Note the use of “column” as an adjective.

l. 679, **jocund**, through F. from Lat. *jucundus*, pleasant, the dawn of a merry day.

l. 680, **breaks away**, that is, the sun leaps up above the morning mists: **noon**, midday, from Lat. *nonus*, ninth, being originally the ninth hour of the day or 3 P.M. Skeat explains that when the time of the church-service called **nones** was altered, the term came to be applied to midday: **sultry**, hot, oppressive.

l. 684, **barbarous horn**, the bugle of the barbarian troops of Tartars, Turcomans, &c.

l. 685, **that flit**, flying out in the breeze as their bearers march on.

l. 687, **the clash**, *sc.* of arms.

l. 688, **the horsetails**. “The horsetail, fixed upon a lance, a Pacha’s standard.”—Author’s note. The rank of the officer was indicated by the number of horse-tails he was entitled to display.

l. 689, **they form**, and the troops take position in line, awaiting the word of command.

l. 690, **Spahi**, *cf.* line 77.

l. 691, **Strike your tents**. Down with your tents and press on to the front. To strike a tent (as to strike sail), is to lower it—preparatory to marching.

l. 692, **skirr**, *i.q.* scour, sweep rapidly across. *Cf.* Shakespeare’s *Henry v.*, iv. 7. 64.

“—we will come to them,
And make them skirr away as swift as stones
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings.”

l. 696, **fellows**, your comrades (he is addressing the cavalry).

l. 697, **Bloodstain the breach**, drench with blood the gap through which they charge.

l. 698, **snort to the rein**, fretting at the bridle’s restraint.

l. 700, **champ**, *i.e.* champing. And they foam at the mouth as they restlessly toss the curb about: **champ**, says Richardson (as distinguished from chew or chew), seems to apply to compression of the teeth unaccompanied by the grinding motion of the jaw.

l. 701, **matches**, the portfires.

l. 704, **phalanx**, *cf.* 404: **Janizar**. The Janissaries were originally a militia formed from the picked youth of captives

taken in war and brought up as Mahomedans. Having no kindred with the people, they were specially dependent on and devoted to the Sultan. Degenerating in later years they became so formidable to the government, that in 1825 the Sultan Mahmood, after provoking them to open revolt, ordered a general massacre, in which some 25,000 Janissaries are said to have perished. The word is of Turkish origin, and means "new soldiers."

l. 706, *scimitar*, prob., says Skeat, a corruption of Pers. *shamshir*, a sword.

l. 707, *khan*, Pers. chief.

l. 708, *vizier*, Ali Goumourgi.

l. 713, *Alla Hu*. "God is great," used as the Mahomedan war-cry.

l. 715, *to scale*, by which to climb.

l. 716, *your hands . . . sabres*, sword in hand.

l. 717, *downs with*, he who first lays low the Christian cross. From the adverbial expression "down with" Byron coins the verb to "down."

l. 719, *dauntless*, fearless, through the F. from Lat. *domitare*, to tame.

l. 720, *brandish*, the waving of swords : *wand*, a burning torch, flame-like sword.

l. 721, *in joyous ire*, exulting in rage.

l. 722, *Silence*, *sc.* keep silence.

l. 723, *headlong*, M.E. *hædling*, head-foremost, recklessly. The adverbial termination *long* is a modification of *ling*, from A.S. *lungu*.

l. 724, *stately*, referring to the proud, dignified bearing of the buffalo, as compared with the mean, cur-like nature of the wolf.

l. 726, *gore*, pierce, stab, from A.S. *gar*, a spear. The word is distinct from gore, blood, which is from A.S. *gor*, dirt (Skeat).

l. 728, *the foremost*, etc. It is to be noticed that Byron does not, except by implication, complete the simile of the wolves, who ultimately, by mere force of numbers, succeed in killing the buffalo.

l. 731, *sheathed in brass*, with brazen breastplate.

l. 733, *Shivered*, shattered. Cf. above, line 669.

l. 735, *in files*, in regular lines, Lat. *filum*, a thread.

l. 736, *Like the mower's grass*. Cf. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 5. 24 :—

"And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,
Fall down before him like the mower's swath."

l. 739, *Spring-tides*. In all tidal waters at the time of the new and full moon, the high tides attain their greatest elevation. These are called the spring tides—as opposed to the neap tides,

which occur at the quarters of the moon and have the least elevation.

l. 740, **From the cliffs.** As from chalk cliffs, great masses are brought down undermined by the inroads of the restless sea. (The picture here presented is familiar to those who know the white cliffs of the English coast.)

l. 743, **Like the avalanche's snow.** As in the Alps the Alpine avalanche thunders down the valley : *avalanche*, F. "a descent of snow into the valley"—a phenomenon common in the Alps, when the heat of the sun melts and loosens great masses of snow which descend suddenly with a roar, carrying all before them and overwhelming houses and even villages. The word is derived from O.F. *aval* (Lat. *ad vallem*) downward or "towards the valley"; opposed to *amont* (Lat. *ad montem*), upward or "towards the hill" (Skeat).

l. 745, **outbreathed**, out of breath, breathless.

l. 748, **Moslem**, from Arab. *muslim*, a Mussulman, allied to Arab. *musallim*, "one who submits to and acquiesces in the decision of another." A Mussulman is one who professes *islam* - i.e. "obedience to the will of God," submission, the true or orthodox faith (Richardson, cited by Skeat).

l. 750, **Heap'd . . . infidel**, their corpses piled up in close ranks as they stood, by the overwhelming foe.

l. 752, **nothing . . . mute**, only the dead were silent.

l. 753, **flash**, *sc.* of the sun.

l. 754, **For quarter.** The cry for mercy and the shout of triumph, **quarter**, in the sense of mercy shown by the conqueror to his enemy when in his power, is explained by De Brieux (quoted by Richardson) as being the portion of pay promised as ransom to the conqueror.

l. 755, **volleying thunder**, the roar of cannon.

l. 760, **annihilating voice**, that murderous roar (the epithet is transferred from the cannon to its voice).

l. 762, **dread and new**, with awful and unwonted echoes.

l. 764, **Salamis and Megara.** Megara, a town eastward of Corinth on the road to Athens; the island of Salamis lying off the coast at about the same distance.

l. 766, **Piræus.** The port of Athens.

l. 767, **From the point . . . gilt.** From end to end every sword was steeped in blood. The words *sword* from A.S., and *sabre* from F., are used in poetry indiscriminately. In military phraseology "*sabre*" is usually applied to the sword worn by cavalry soldiers.

l. 768, **Gilt**, contracted from *gilded* : **But the rampart**, now the wall is scaled and the sack of the city begun; only the slaughter that follows remains to be completed.

1. 771, **mingling**, *sc.* with the din of battle.
1. 772, **dome**, temple, church.
1. 773, **hark to the haste**, hear the footsteps of fugitives in head-long flight.
1. 774, **that**, which.
1. 775, **vantage ground**, some point of vantage, that is, some spot where a stand may be made: **vantage**, says Skeat, is a headless form of *F. advantage*.
1. 777, **desperate groups**, clusters of men at bay.
1. 779, **With banded backs**, shoulder to shoulder and with back to the wall they turn and stand at bay.
1. 781, **an old man**, Minotti, governor of Corinth: **veteran**, Lat. *veteranus*; the seasoned soldier's arm retained its power.
1. 783, **So gallantly . . . fray**. So like a hero did he bear the burden of the fight: **brunt** (Scand.), the heat, that is, the chief shock of battle: **fray**, "a doublet of M.E. *affray*, terror," the older sense of the word (Skeat).
1. 788, **Many a scar . . . bright**, under that glittering breastplate lay hid the traces of many a wound given in fights of olden days.
1. 789, **lurk'd**, this is a misuse of the word "lurk," which strictly implies purposed concealment: **corslet**, dimin. of O.F. *cors*, body.
1. 791, **had been ta'en before**, each one had been received in front (he had never turned his back upon an enemy).
1. 793, **could cope with**, was a match for, *sc.* in fight: **cope**, from Dutch *koopen*, to bargain; hence to barter, exchange like for like.
1. 794, **at bay**, a phrase formed from *F. aboi*, the bark of a dog. To stand at bay is to face the baying or barking of hounds, as a hunted animal when he at last turns upon his pursuers.
1. 795, **thin hairs**, the white hairs of his scanty locks.
1. 797, **Othman**, Ottoman, Turkish.
1. 798, **when dipp'd**. Even as a youth, when first he fleshed his sword in battle with the infidel, he left many a Turkish wife to mourn her husband.
1. 801, **Of all . . . ire**. Not a man of those he slew but was young enough to have been his son.
1. 805, **in the strait**. In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles between the Venetians and Turks.—Author's note.
1. 808, **hecatomb**, a sacrifice of a large number of victims; *lit.* a sacrifice of a hundred (oxen) (Greek). He had slain with his own hand more than a hundred foes.
1. 809, **If shades . . . appeased**. If the restless spirits of the dead may be laid to rest by the spilling of blood.
1. 810, **Patroclus**, the friend of Achilles, slain by Hector at the siege of Troy and avenged by Achilles, his spirit being appeased by the blood of his victims. So in the *Odyssey*, book xi., when Ulysses calls up the spirits of the dead, there is a sacrifice

of sheep, and as each spirit rises he comes near and drinks the blood before he speaks.

l. 812, **Where Asia's bounds.** The Dardanelles (formerly called the Hellespont) divide Europe from Asia : **ours**, *sc.* Europe.

l. 813, **where thousands before**, *sc.* on the Asiatic shore where lay the victims of the Trojan war, who, though their dust is scattered to the winds, live for ever in the pages of Homer.

l. 821, **nervous**, sinewy, strong.

l. 822, **swifter**, *sc.* even than that of his Moslem followers.

l. 825, **Others a gaudier garb . . . gilt.** Less showy may be his dress, less meet for the spoiler's hand ; less thickly jewelled may be his sword, but none is more deeply dyed in blood.

l. 831, **Look through the thick of the fight.** (*cf.* Macaulay's *Irry* :

"Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre."

l. 834, **There is not a banner.** No Pacha's standard will lead on the cavalry charge like Alp's bare arm.

l. 835, **Delhis**, "horsemen, answering to our forlorn hope."
Author's note to Childe Harold, Canto 2.

l. 838, **late**, lately. There stand the flower of the army, or there lie their dead bodies.

l. 839, **the craven**, the vanquished. "The termination in *en* is a mistaken one, and makes the word look like a past participle. The word is really **cravand**, where *and* is the regular Northumbrian form of the present participle, equivalent to modern E. *ing*. Thus **cravand** means **craving**, *i.e.* one who is begging quarter, one who sues for mercy" (Skeat).

l. 842, **scorns**, is too proud to utter a cry of pain.

l. 843, **mustering**, gathering his little strength for one last thrust at the nearest of his fallen foes, and fighting, faint as he is, to the death on the bloody field.

l. 844, **level'd**, brought to the ground.

l. 845, **mutual**. Here, as often in poetry, the thought outruns the words ; as "mutual" implies blows given and received, so "grappling," though strictly spoken of the hero only, seems to refer to the two men "clutching each other."

l. 849, **quarter take**, let me spare thy life.

l. 851, **renegado**, Span. traitor.

l. 852, **life of thy gift**, the life thou gavest : **would**, *sc.* were sure to.

l. 854, **by thy pride**, because thou art too proud to yield.

l. 857, **undefiled**, *sc.* by marriage with an infidel.

l. 858, **Grimly . . . blow**. A stern smile crossed Minotti's face to see his enemy reel and bend his head as though he had been struck.

l. 864, **Slaves . . . thee**, referring to the inferior position assigned to Mahomedan women as compared with the freedom of their Christian sisters.

l. 867, **While Minotti's words . . . wound**. While Minotti's avenging tongue cut more deeply than his sword could have pierced : **wreaking**, inflicting.

l. 869, **had found**, would have found.

l. 872, **long defended**, long held against the enemy.

l. 874, **would . . . renew**, sought to kindle anew the slackening fire of battle.

l. 878, **spun**, fell whirling to the ground. The original sense of **spin**, says Skeat, is to draw out into threads ; the second sense comes from the rapid motion of the spinning wheel.

l. 881, **Eternal darkness . . . trunk**. Then the darkness of death came over the still throbbing corpse.

l. 882, **trunk**, Lat. *truncus*, the stem of a tree.

l. 883, **left**, *sc.* being left.

l. 887, **oozed**, flowed slowly. This word has lost an initial *w* ; it should rather be **woze**. For the loss of *w*, cf. provincial E. *ooman* for *woman* (Skeat).

l. 892, **heralded**, proclaimed his approach to the gates of death. A herald is an officer who makes proclamations, *e.g.* in an old tournament announcing the style and title of an approaching knight. The word is of German origin.

l. 893, **Ere . . . pray**, before a prayer could even pass through his mind.

l. 894, **unanel'd**, unblest he died. The word means "without having received the Christian rite of extreme unction," that is, a last anointing with consecrated oil. It is *lit.*, says Skeat, "not on-oiled." Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 5. 77.

" Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd."

l. 901, **swords and spears**, nominative to *interlarded*.

l. 904, **Street by street . . . command**. Not a foot in the town, not an inch of ground still left uncaptured, but Minotti bravely fights for it.

l. 908, **aiding heart and hand**, supporting him *with* brave heart and strong right hand.

l. 910, **is tenable**, may still be held against the foe.

l. 911, **late**, just now : **fated**, in the sense of *fatal*, deadly, death-bearing.

l. 914, **bending**, turning their course.

l. 915, **before**, before them, that is, as they retreat backwards, facing the enemy.

l. 919, **fane**, church. Lat. *fanum*, a temple.

- l. 921, **massy pile**, under cover of its stout walls.
- l. 922, **breathing-time**, time to take breath.
- l. 923, **adding ranks**, line pressing upon line.
- l. 924, **press**, pl. after *host*, noun of multitude : **such strength**
 . . . **retreat**, so hotly and in such crowds that there can be no going back.
- l. 925, **balk**, a balk is a beam or bar, so to balk is to bar the way, hinder.
- l. 928, **may vainly try**, would try in vain.
- l. 929, **column**, Lat. *columna*, a pillar, hence of a body of troops, a row of figures, etc.
- l. 930, **do or die**, must conquer or fall, a familiar sample of alliteration.
- l. 933, **fast**, . . . **still**, fast as their comrades fall, they fill the gaps, and keep the line unbroken.
- l. 935, **wax**, grow, become.
- l. 939, **deadly aim'd**, with unerring aim.
- l. 940, **crevice**, O.F. *crevasse*, crack, loophole.
- l. 942, **sulphurous shower**, thick volumes of the cannon-smoke : **portal**, O.F. gate, door.
- l. 944, **hinges**, so called because the door **hangs** upon it ; M.E. *hengen*, to hang (Skeat) : **creak**, groan beneath the charge.
- l. 947, **darkly**, alone and resolute in the dim light stood Minotti on the altar-steps : **altar**, on which the sacrifice of the Christian mass is offered.
- l. 949, **Madonna's face**. From the stained window over his head the Virgin shed on him the light of her loving eyes : **Madonna**, Ital.=my lady, applied to the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, whose image was on the stained-glass window over the altar.
- l. 955, **the boy-God**, the infant Christ.
- l. 959, **Though slaughter**. Though all her temple runs with blood : **aisles**, F. *aile*, a wing, Lat. *ala*, the wings of a church ; applied to the passages between the seats.
- l. 962, **thereby**, close by, close at hand.
- l. 965, **The vaults**. The cellars under the inlaid pavement : **vault** is an arched chamber, usually underground : **mosaic** is applied to any ornamental surface made with small pieces of stone, wood, etc., arranged in a picture or pattern ; as on the sandal-wood boxes, etc., of Bombay manufacture. Here the mosaic stone is the pavement of inlaid coloured marbles. The word is derived from Low Lat. *musæicus*, belonging to the Muses, artistic.
- l. 967, **graven floor**. Their names were carved upon the stones.
- l. 969, **The carved crests**, . . . **diffuse**, the heraldic carvings and the strange tints of veined and many-coloured stones : **crest**, strictly the comb or tuft on a bird's head, used of the distinctive devices

adopted in heraldry and originally surmounting the knight's helmet, like the bird's tuft.

l. 974, **coffin'd row**, lay in rows in their coffins.

l. 975, **in sable state**, as they lay heaped up in their dark pomp, they could be dimly seen through their prison bars: **sable**, dark, black, originally of the dark fur of the sable, an animal of the weasel kind. (*cf. Hamlet*, ii. 2, 274:—

“ —He whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble.”

l. 976, **grate**, grating, a framework of iron bars.

l. 977, **But war, . . . dead**. But now their dark resting-place had been invaded by war, and there, through lines of caverns sacred to the dead, lay piled in great heaps, beside the naked bones, the stores of her brimstone dust.

l. 978, **along**, that is, following the lines of the vaults.

l. 979, **sulphurous treasures**, *sc.* gunpowder.

l. 980, **fleshless dead**, that is, the bodies now reduced to skeletons.

l. 982, **magazine**, storehouse, derived ultimately from Arab. *makhzan*, a storehouse.

l. 983, **train**, line of gunpowder, to blow up the magazine; Lat. *trahere*, to draw.

l. 984, **resource**, expedient, plan of escape. “The sense is ‘new source, fresh spring,’ hence a new supply or fresh expedient” (Skeat).

l. 988, **For lack of**. Since there live no more whose blood may satisfy the lust now kindled for revenge.

l. 992, **fell**, hurl down; to fell is to cause to fall, as a tree: **niche**, a recess in a wall. The word is derived from Ital. *nicchio*, a shell, hence a shell-like recess, so called, probably, from the early shape of it (Skeat).

l. 993, **spoil**, plunder, Lat. *spoliare*: **wrest**, force, take by force.

l. 995, **saints have bless'd**, rich vessels for the altar's service consecrated by the blessing of holy men of old. In dedicating vessels for use in the church the priest pronounces on them a benediction: **saints**, holy men, Lat. *sanctus*, specially applied to those who are canonized, that is, whose names are placed by special Canon on the catalogue of holy men, having a day appointed in the church calendar to be observed in their memory.

l. 996, **high altar**, the principal altar at the east end of the church, as distinguished from minor altars in other parts of the building.

l. 999, **The cup**. The chalice or cup which holds the consecrated

wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Service of the Mass.

l. 1003, **Converted . . . divine.** It is believed by Roman Catholics that by the prayer of consecration the wine is turned into the blood of Christ.

l. 1005, **shrive**, to purge them of sin ; strictly to "hear confessions and enjoin penance," a necessary portion of the duty of those who had the cure of souls (Richardson). The word, says Skeat, is borrowed from Lat. *scribere*, to write, to draw up a law, impose a penalty.

l. 1009, **cast**, moulded. In this sense to **cast** is to throw fused metal into a mould.

l. 1016, **Spire**, church tower (a tower which tapers to a point).

l. 1020, **expired**, were blown into the air, *lit.* breathed their last.

l. 1022, **backward bent**, that forced backward from the shore by the upheaval of the earth in the explosion.

l. 1023, **unrent**, although not torn asunder.

l. 1026, **athwart**, Scand. across.

l. 1027, **blast**, *lit.* blowing. By the breath of that dread explosion.

l. 1030, **rockets**. O. Ital. *rochetto*, a distaff. "The rocket seems to have been named from its long thin shape bearing some resemblance to a quill or bobbin for winding silk, and so to a distaff" (Skeat).

l. 1033, **Scorch'd . . . span**, burnt to ashes that might lie on the palm of the hand.

l. 1037, **which received**, whose waters were lashed by the rain into a myriad rings.

l. 1052, **scalp**, some fragment of a head.

l. 1053, **rafters**, roof-beams.

l. 1055, **dinted**, embedded.

l. 1056, **reeking**, smoking.

l. 1058, **disappeared**, that is, fled at the sound.

l. 1062, **the distant steer**, on far-off fields the ox broke from the plough.

l. 1063, **the nearer steed**, *sc.* nearer to the explosion, where its force would be more violent ; referring to horses in the besieging force.

l. 1064, **girth**, his belly-band.

l. 1068, **Where echo . . . still**. Where the peals of sound still echoed from hill to hill.

l. 1069, **The jackal's troop**. "I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw or heard these animals, but among the ruins of Ephesus I

have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins and follow armies."—Author's note.

l. 1072, *Like crying babe*. "Leave out this couplet" suggested Gifford, but the description will be recognized as faithful enough by those to whom the jackal's wail is familiar.

l. 1073, *ruffled heart*, in startled alarm.

l. 1076, *dun*, so dark and dense.

l. 1077, *their smoke*, with terror he scented their sulphurous fumes: *soar*, to fly aloft, *Low Lat. exaurare*, to expose to the air (Skeat).

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